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MICROMANAGEMENT AND A COMMANDER'S LACK OF OPERATIONAL VISION: A CASE STUDY  
OF OPERATION ALLIED FORCE

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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An operational vision disconnected from the political end state and dependent on scripting of the enemy is not likely to deliver the desired outcome. The operational commander must be prepared to assert himself with political leaders to create the conditions necessary for success of his organization and to advise properly of the actions that may be ultimately required, that is, the worst case as well as the probable one. In order to achieve fast-paced, decisive operations, he must state clear objectives, empower his subordinates, and resist the temptation to micromanage them.

This work analyzes General Wesley Clark's operational vision and how he tried to implement it during Operation Allied Force. Although victory was achieved, General Clark's operational vision throughout the operation was disconnected from the desired political end state and relied heavily on scripting Serbian leadership. General Clark discounted Serbian capabilities and thereby reinforced the NATO political leadership's belief that a three day air operation would coerce Serbian President Milosevic back to the negotiating table. When that didn't occur, the operation evolved into micromanaged escalation, whereby command by VTC and CINC approval of individual targets became the order of the day.

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## ABSTRACT OF

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An operational vision disconnected from the political end state and dependent on scripting of the enemy is not likely to deliver the desired outcome. The operational commander must be prepared to assert himself with political leaders to create the conditions necessary for success of his organization and to advise properly of the actions that may be ultimately required, that is, the worst case as well as the probable one. In order to achieve fast-paced, decisive operations, he must state clear objectives, empower his subordinates, and resist the temptation to micromanage them.

This work analyzes General Wesley Clark's operational vision and how he tried to implement it during Operation Allied Force. Although victory was achieved, General Clark's operational vision throughout the operation was disconnected from the desired political end state and relied heavily on scripting Serbian leadership. General Clark discounted Serbian capabilities and thereby reinforced the NATO political leadership's belief that a three day air operation would coerce Serbian President Milosevic back to the negotiating table. When that didn't occur, the operation evolved into micromanaged escalation, whereby command by VTC and CINC approval of individual targets became the order of the day.

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## INTRODUCTION

Wes, Wes, you have won, you have done it...You will be my friend for life.

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana to General Wesley  
Clark, *Waging Modern War*

Victory certainly warranted Secretary General Solana's ecstasy; he had endured seventy-eight days of air operations while striving to hold an increasingly strained alliance together. His joy would have been much greater with an earlier end to the conflict. While General Clark did achieve victory, his actions during Operation Allied Force demonstrate a lack of operational vision due in large part to his scripting of the enemy. General Clark's actions also show that micromanagement is not the best solution to a flawed or missing plan.

## COMMANDER'S VISION

The very essence of leadership is you have to have a vision. It's got to be a vision you articulate clearly and forcefully on every occasion. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet.

Tom Peters, *Thriving on Chaos*

A commander's vision, articulated through his intent, is a clear statement of the end state he wants his organization to achieve. From his vision should flow the operational objectives that chart the roadmap to making the vision a reality. General Clark confirms this in what he knew was necessary for successful command, "Create and implement a strategic vision, as best you can within the mission and resources, play straight, work cooperatively, take care of the troops, and trust your superiors."<sup>i</sup> Yet, when facing NATO's first war, he did not articulate a clear vision supported by objectives but rather developed several "measures of merit" to guide the operation. On the political level, his overarching measure was "to retain alliance solidarity and the full support of our regional partners,"<sup>ii</sup> and on the military front, the three measures were to "not lose aircraft,...impact the Yugoslavian military and police forces on the ground as rapidly and effectively as possible,... and protect our ground forces...from retaliation or other attacks."<sup>iii</sup> By his own admission, "These weren't exactly objectives."<sup>iv</sup> The military measures of merit could deliver his political measure of merit. That was important because alliance cohesion was NATO's center of gravity. As General Clark put it, "...without political backing the campaign was over."<sup>v</sup> However, meeting the measures of merit would prove not to deliver the desired end state of coercing the Serbs back to the negotiating table. They failed because they were not focused on the Serbian strategic centers of gravity, identified by Dr. Milan Vego as "the will to fight of Milosevic and his inner circle and the country's military-economic potential as a whole;"<sup>vi</sup> and because the

absence of an allied ground force made the Serbian forces in Kosovo difficult to target from the air. Hence, his operational vision proved an “uncertain trumpet,” disconnected from the actual political end state and not focused on decisive operations. Clark believed only a short air operation would be required to coerce the Serbs back to negotiations because of his scripting of Milosevic. Milosevic would prove him wrong.

### NATO GOES TO WAR

The lid blew off of the Balkans powder keg on 24 March 1999, as NATO sought to stop the developing humanitarian crisis in Kosovo by intervening militarily. NATO had been seeking a diplomatic solution between the Serbian government and the leaders of the Albanian Kosovars. The Serbs, however, rejected the proposed settlement at Rambouillet, thus triggering NATO’s threatened air strikes. Regretting their tardy action to alleviate the Bosnian crisis earlier in the decade, NATO hoped to forestall the Serbs’ ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians and coerce Milosevic back to the negotiating table. Seventy-eight days later, Milosevic finally caved in to NATO pressure and acceded to a Military-Technical Agreement that permitted NATO forces to enter Kosovo to restore order; but during those seventy-eight days ethnic cleansing by the Serbs continued in earnest.

Operation Allied Force affirmed Clausewitz’s dictum that war is subordinate to politics. Indeed, the war was fought under great political constraints. No support could be built among NATO member nations for a ground operation in Kosovo.<sup>vii</sup> Achieving consensus for action among the nineteen NATO member nations dictated the elimination of the ground operation and options for more strategic air attacks in the development of the plans for military employment. The previous year, U.S. Air Forces Europe (USAFE) had developed and presented to General Clark, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), a doctrinally sound strategic air operations plan to coerce Milosevic; but NATO diplomats balked at the intensity of the campaign and wanted something more limited.<sup>viii</sup> Having experienced strategic bombing firsthand in World War II, Europeans have a much different view of it than Americans. NATO leaders opted for a phased air operation “of limited scope and duration” that all members could accept, with the hope of achieving coercion with minimal damage to Serbia.<sup>ix</sup> Lord Gilbert, the second senior British defense minister, characterized that the “NATO policy of choosing targets in staged increments was a military nonsense, based on political timidity.”<sup>x</sup> The concern over collateral

damage permeated the planning and execution of the operation and caused friction among the alliance members.<sup>xi</sup> The longer the operation dragged on, the greater became the stress on the NATO's cohesion.

### CLARK'S SCRIPTING AND ITS EFFECT

I don't see this as a long term operation. I think that this is something...that is achievable within a relatively short period of time.

Secretary of State Madeline Albright,  
MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour, 24 March 1999

Secretary Albright's quote summed up the general view of NATO political leadership at the start of hostilities. One needs to consider why instead it took seventy-eight days of bombing to coerce Milosevic into accepting NATO's demands. NATO's leadership expected Milosevic to be cowed by short duration bombing because he had succumbed to bombardment or the threat of it on two previous occasions.<sup>xii</sup> There were, however, key differences in Kosovo when compared to Bosnia in 1995. First, Kosovo is an integral part of Serbia, unlike Bosnia, which was a separate republic within the former Yugoslavia. Serbs have a strong cultural affinity for Kosovo based on historical religious and ethnic ties. Second, Milosevic had already agreed to resolve the Bosnia dispute by taking charge of Serb negotiations before the 1995 bombing began.<sup>xiii</sup> Finally, unlike the Croatian forces in Bosnia, there was no effective ground force in Kosovo that could engage the Serb army and force it into the open to facilitate allied air strikes.

Instead of analyzing Serbian capabilities, General Clark relied on his prior extensive experience with Milosevic in predicting a quick outcome for the operation. General Clark's first exposure to Milosevic had been as the Joint Chiefs of Staff representative during the negotiation of the Dayton Accords on Bosnia in 1995. As SACEUR, he had also orchestrated the aerial demonstration that brought Milosevic back to the negotiating table in 1998. Additionally, he had met personally with Milosevic on numerous occasions. He was confident he understood his adversary, but he failed to recognize two critical elements in his planning for Kosovo. Clark did not fully recognize the value of Kosovo to the Serbs, and he did not acknowledge that bombing would do little to disrupt the Serbian security forces who were conducting ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. The British House of Commons confirmed this latter failure in its report on Kosovo,

None of our witnesses has seriously offered the view, retrospectively, that an air campaign could directly inhibit the activities of Milosevic's ethnic cleansers. But this coercive motive for its actions seems at the time not to have been fully and frankly acknowledged by the alliance.<sup>xiv</sup>

These failures flawed General Clark's operational vision for Operation Allied Force. He expected that an abbreviated bombing campaign would cause Milosevic to give in to NATO demands and consequently the ethnic cleansing would stop. General Clark's scripting of Milosevic suited his political leaders. It gave them the low cost, low risk answer to the intervention question. General Clark's scripting of Milosevic prevented full consideration of the actions necessary if Milosevic did not cave as he had in the past, and the negative political implications if these actions became required. It put NATO on a path to war that General Colin Powell later assessed as having unclear political goals and lacking the military means for achieving those goals within such a consensus body.<sup>xv</sup> Thus, Clark's advice to his political masters, while based on his historical experience with Milosevic, discounted the other possible outcomes. As the British Parliament Select Committee on Defence commented in its report on Kosovo,

Nonetheless, the military have a clear duty to point to, and a responsibility to plan for, the worst, especially if they detect a drift toward military intervention which they suspect is based on unrealistic expectations.<sup>xvi</sup>

General Clark's scripting of Milosevic led him to believe NATO's political expectations were realistic and to neglect the "the responsibility to plan for the worst."

It is the duty of the operational commander to identify in his planning the potential courses of action available when the enemy counteracts. His planners must then develop branch plans for these possibilities as well as sequel plans to exploit success. While NATO advertised that it was conducting a "phased air campaign," the planning only extended through the first phase. There were no approved target sets beyond the first phase Integrated Air Defense System and punishment and demonstration targets. According to the Joint Force Air Component Commander, Lieutenant General Short, "There was no plan beyond three days."<sup>xvii</sup> One is drawn to the conclusion that General Clark's operational vision extended no further than the three-day first phase. General Clark's scripting offered no other possible outcome, thus the shortsighted operational vision. As the authors Daalder and O'Hanlon succinctly put it, "NATO had no plan B."<sup>xviii</sup>

## NATO'S ESCALATION

This lack of planning posed a dilemma to NATO leadership when Milosevic chose to resist NATO's attacks. Some NATO leaders had little stomach for escalating the air campaign, but giving up on the air attacks without a successful resolution would seriously undermine NATO's credibility and potentially its long-term

viability. NATO chose escalation over loss of credibility, and a flurry of effort ensued to identify and approve additional targets after the first phase failed to deliver the scripted outcome. NATO had the USAFE plan on the shelf that would have coerced Milosevic back to the negotiating table but again opted not to use it. The USAFE plan included strategic targets (power grids, bridges, petroleum, command and control nodes), the exact kinds of targets that eventually were struck.<sup>xix</sup> Rather than pursue doctrinally sound effects-based air operations, politically driven gradualism persisted.

One can draw some disturbing parallels between the sequence of events in Kosovo and those in Vietnam. The same gradualism and signaling by bombing that characterized Operation Rolling Thunder<sup>xx</sup> in Vietnam were applied in Operation Allied Force. When General Clark's three day air operation failed, he pushed for additional targets in order to coerce Milosevic. Rather than define the effects he wanted to achieve and develop target sets to achieve those effects, he demanded the development of 2000 targets in Serbia and Kosovo; even though it became apparent that there were not 2000 worthwhile targets in the area of operations. This would appear to be war by algebra, in a manner akin to General Westmoreland measuring success by body counts, with little regard to whether the bodies were valid enemy forces. Additionally, General Clark sought more forces as Operation Allied Force dragged on. Besides Task Force Hawk in Albania, he also continued to seek additional aircraft to escalate air operations, more than doubling the number of aircraft to over 1,000 by the end of air operations. The parallel to Westmoreland's repeated requests to add forces in order to achieve final victory rather than reevaluate his operational vision and objectives is demonstrated by Lieutenant General Short's estimation that at the start of the war, "I had enough airpower to attack the Third Army and to attack Belgrade but he [Clark] wouldn't let me do that....We were not allowed to conduct parallel operations."<sup>xxi</sup>

General Clark would assert that a symptom of modern war is that political considerations override considerations of the effectiveness of military operations. No doubt there is some accuracy in this assertion. The Clausewitzian view that war is an instrument of and subject to policy is generally accepted. The solution in the case of modern war is for the operational commander to assert himself with his political masters to obtain the conditions necessary for military success. He must also advise when the political constraints make the choice of force unlikely to achieve the desired political end state. General Clark had missed the opportunity to do this before the start of hostilities. In fact, he noted shortly after Operation Allied Force started, "beyond the

several actions I was pressing with [CJCS] Shelton, I hadn't discussed overall strategy with Secretary Cohen or the President at all.”<sup>xxii</sup> When Milosevic did not act according to the script, General Clark should have recognized the error of his vision and pressed for reconsideration of the political objectives and the constraints on air operations.

A thorny matter the operational commander must face is confronting the political issues to insure that unreasonable expectations are not made for military employment. General Zinni writes of the battlefield commander, “We will expect him to stand up to civilian leadership before thinking of his own career.”<sup>xxiii</sup> The operational commander must make sure that political strictures do not so constrain his subordinate commanders that his objectives cannot be achieved. One has only to recall the reluctance of the military leadership to confront the Johnson administration over the conduct of the war in Vietnam in order to see the potential for negative outcomes. General Johnson, Chief of Staff of the Army from 1964 to 1968, sorely regretted a “lapse in moral courage” that caused him not to resign in protest of the President’s Vietnam policies that, among other things, forced violation of nearly every principle of war.<sup>xxiv</sup> The operational commander must forthrightly and relentlessly both advise his political leaders and advocate for sensible employment of his forces.

The operational commander must create the linkage between the political decisions and his vision and operational objectives. In this role he may either contribute to or attempt to force the political decision-making process, but he must be an active participant. While much is made of the ultimate falling out between President Truman and General MacArthur, it needs to be recognized that MacArthur as an operational commander had convinced the President to change the strategic end state when he crossed the 38th parallel with the operational objective of seizing the whole of Korea. Ultimately, MacArthur proved to “bet his stars” based on his assessment of the strategic and operational situations.

Had General Clark more effectively argued for doctrinal parallel air operations with the U.S. and NATO political leadership, he could have created an operational vision and objectives that would have permitted more effective air operations, potentially shortening the conflict and reducing the associated risk, collateral damage, and resource expenditure. Targets would have been less likely to require multiple strikes because they would have been developed and approved as sets, thereby lessening aircrew exposure to antiaircraft fire. Less re-strikes also equate to less opportunities for collateral damage. Resourcing requirements would have been

reduced because air operations would have executed with greater speed and would have struck earlier and decisively at Milosevic's center of gravity. The requirement for additional forces, if any, would have been reduced. As Michael Ignatieff observed in Virtual War, "The paradox is that greater ruthlessness – going downtown the first night and taking out the grid – might have been more effective, and in the end, more merciful."<sup>xxv</sup>

### MICROMANAGING THE WAR

The fact that, historically speaking, those armies have been most successful which did not turn their troops into automatons, did not control everything from the top, and allowed subordinates considerable latitude has been abundantly demonstrated.

Martin van Creveld, *Command in War*

General Clark recognized that operational and tactical level decisions could have a strategic impact. Rather than trusting his subordinate commanders to follow his guidance and giving them the latitude to arrive at the appropriate decision, he chose to micromanage their operations during Operation Allied Force.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Targeting was an aspect of the operation in which General Clark was intimately involved. If his operational vision included an effective air operation, his actions did not support it. The targeting process remained over-centralized and fundamentally flawed throughout the war. Initially, all fixed targets had to be approved by the alliance. Later in the operation, General Clark was delegated "the authority to approve fixed targets that would potentially cause less than 20 civilian casualties and mobile targets."<sup>xxvii</sup> Clark only delegated to the JFACC targeting of mobile targets, i.e., Serbian VJ and MUP forces, in Kosovo without further higher headquarters approval. He retained approval of all fixed targets throughout the operation. Even then, sensitive targets still required alliance member government approval due to concerns with collateral damage. Overall, about 64% of the targets required approval at a level above General Clark. These higher level approvals often took two weeks over and above the SACEUR approval process.<sup>xxviii</sup> The delay due to the centralized approval of targets enabled the Serbs to recover and minimize the damage from strikes and directly degraded the tempo of the air operations.

General Clark continued to personally review individual fixed targets on a daily basis throughout the operation. He did this in excruciating detail, sometimes going so far as to change the designated mean point of impact (DMPI) if he felt it would reduce the likelihood of collateral damage. He would also question the weaponeering, rather than trusting the judgment of the targeteers who were seeking a certain desired effect.<sup>xxix</sup>

Rather than working to reduce the political impediments to an effective air campaign and create the conditions for success for his subordinate commander, he added to the problem.

Although submitted as target sets, targets were approved individually, rather than as sets. This made it significantly more difficult to achieve effects-based operations because there was no effort nor guarantee that related targets would be approved for striking at the same time. The General Accounting Office cites the example of attempting to achieve the effect of stopping production of an oil refinery that required striking of several targets. The process approved only some of the targets, "...which reduced the effectiveness of the strike since the refinery was not totally disabled."<sup>xxx</sup> This increased risk because the same fixed target would have to be struck again when, or in some cases, if the other targets within that set were approved. Despite no combat loss of flight personnel during the operation, re-strikes exposed aircrews to the Serbian integrated air defense over what the Serbs now knew was a NATO target.

General Clark's efforts would have been better spent to state his objectives, i.e., to define the effects he as an operational commander wanted, and work to correct the deficiencies in the target approval process so that target sets could be struck to achieve his objectives and the full effects of parallel warfare. Lieutenant General Short described how the targeting process should work,

Give me your [the CinC's] guidance on what effects you want me to achieve...and I'll achieve it. Let me pick the target sets. I don't have a problem with the CinC,...the President or [British Prime Minister] Tony Blair, for that matter, approving target sets. Approve the target sets for me and then let me pick individual targets within those sets to accomplish the effect and to package the best way I can....I need the package in order to protect the force and get the most bang for the buck from airpower.<sup>xxxii</sup>

General Clark's lack of vision and clearly defined objectives for the air operation undoubtedly contributed to its prolonging, effectively dragging it out longer than necessary had parallel air operations been approved and proper targeting employed.

This was the first war where the videoteleconference (VTC) became one of the primary channels of communication between the operational commander and his subordinate commanders. General Clark's VTCs included commanders that spanned the levels of war from the strategic/operational down to the tactical level and could occur as often as three or four times daily.<sup>xxxiii</sup> The limited nature of Operation Allied Force may have made this practical, but one is wary of its wider application in future wars. Had there been a joint campaign rather than only an air operation, General Clark would have been overwhelmed by the flow of information.

There has to be an upward limit on how much input the operational commander can process unfiltered by his own staff's analysis. Admiral James Ellis, Clark's subordinate Joint Task Force Commander during the operation, "cited the propensity of VTC's to be voracious consumers of leadership and staff working hours...and poor substitutes for rigorous mission planning and written orders."<sup>xxxiii</sup> The CinC's time is valuable; he needs to be fighting the political battles that will enable conditions for success of his subordinates. As importantly, his subordinate commanders and their staffs need to be fighting the war.

This leads to another consideration of videoteleconferences; their effectiveness as a tool for command and control. How much daily guidance do subordinates need? Is the VTC the best means for disseminating it? The first question is determined by the CinC and his willingness to trust his subordinates to accomplish the mission according to his intent. The VTC certainly allows the CinC to insert himself as minutely as he chooses, even down to the tactical level of war. On the second question, a VTC is a virtual meeting and the attendees each walk away with their own perception of the decisions arrived at during the meeting. Rather than creating unity of effort, VTCs can have the opposite effect unless an effort is made to promulgate the minutes and decisions of the VTC in a written format. "Clark's VTC guidance was never written down or distributed in any systematic way."<sup>xxxiv</sup> This creates a spiral that encourages micromanagement. The lack of a published written record of the VTC generates the requirement to provide daily guidance via VTC but never resolves the underlying issue, lack of written guidance. Had General Clark ensured that the guidance and decisions from each VTC were distributed to the participants and subordinate commanders who had an interest, he could have clearly communicated his intent to all. This would have been more likely to produce unity of effort and reduce confusion and the need for micromanagement. Without a written record, the VTC not only facilitates micromanagement; it almost demands it.

### CAUSES OF MICROMANAGEMENT

Today's operational commander possesses a plethora of technological innovations that enhance situational awareness and facilitate command and control. As discussed, the advent of broadband communications enables the operational commander to simultaneously meet with other geographically separated commanders through VTC. Technology permits the operational commander to exert his direct influence into multiple levels of war, circumventing intermediate commanders as he chooses. While this

expedites the flow of information, it also can lead to a loss of unity of effort and put the junior commander in the untenable situation of conflicting guidance from two different higher headquarters, adding complexity to the chain of command. If the operational commander is so inclined, these systems offer great opportunity for micromanagement. However, if the operational commander is intimately involved in all decisions, from strategic to tactical, the net effect will be to stifle initiative and thereby slow the tempo of operations. Subordinate commanders will come to expect continuing guidance and be reluctant to act without it. If the lower level decisions must be made at higher levels of command, the pace of operations will inevitably slow. Slowing the pace of operations is the direct opposite of the intent of increasing reliance on technology. Therefore, technology is a facilitator, not the driver, of micromanagement; because the commander always has a choice of how he employs his means, be they combat forces or the means of command and control.

General Clark would likely argue that micromanagement is a symptom of modern war, that the political component is so overriding that the subordinate commander's freedom of action must be limited. In his words,

What we discovered increasingly was that the political and strategic levels impinged on the operational and tactical levels...Sometimes even seemingly insignificant tactical events packed a huge political wallop. This is a key characteristic of modern war.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Modern war is unlikely to occur on some remote battlefield without a media presence, and tactical decisions are more likely to have a strategic impact when they are recorded on video for broadcast. The same advances in communications that contribute to the revolution in military affairs also create connections exploited by civilian media to report on the ongoing action, often in real time. While this "CNN factor" may not influence political leadership's decision to intervene in a crisis,<sup>xxxvi</sup> there is no doubt that media reports do affect the support for an ongoing conflict. When the inevitable question is raised by either the media or his superiors, the operational commander will be well prepared if he can link his subordinate's action to his own intent. Thus, it is critical that the actions of subordinates are in accord with the commander's vision and objectives. A clearly communicated vision and objectives are more likely to succeed than micromanagement, for, despite technology, the operational commander cannot be all places at once.

General Clark would contend that the desire for micromanagement is product of the culture of the American military. This is best exemplified by General Clark's own description of the underlying causes of his

clash with the British Lieutenant General Sir Michael Jackson over Clark's attempted micromanagement of the operational task of confronting the Russians to secure the Pristina airport at the end of the air war,

In the British system, a field commander is supported. Period. That is the rule. A field commander is given mission type orders, not detailed and continuing guidance. It is a wonderful, traditional approach, one that embodies trust in the commander and confidence in his judgment as the man on the scene. The American military has always aspired to this model but has seldom seemed to attain it.

My experience couldn't have been more different than Jackson's. In my service, I had seen frequent oversight by higher headquarters, repeated questioning of seemingly insignificant details and surprisingly little autonomy for field commanders.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

One is tempted to consider this an isolated case of friction between two commanders with differing views of the situation, but there is evidence that this desire for micromanagement is more endemic to the American military than the platitudes about centralized planning and decentralized execution would indicate. One summary of a recent survey of hundreds of Army majors at the Command and General Staff College stated,

Senior leaders are devoted to micromanagement and their own career advancement—they spend most of their time avoiding mistakes instead of explaining to soldiers why they are on a deployment and what impact they are making.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Yet the use of mission-type orders is not exclusively British. It is neither foreign nor new to the U.S. operational commanders. There are notable examples of American operational commanders who did issue mission-type orders, giving their subordinate commanders great autonomy. The operational commander must have the courage to accept risk to be able to do this. Not only must he confront the political issues from above, but also he must trust his subordinate commanders to accomplish the objectives he directs, allowing them freedom of action to apply their own ingenuity to operational problem solving. Mission-type orders direct what is to be done, leaving it to the subordinate leader to figure out the “how” within the constraints of the commander's intent. Witness General Grant's order of 4 April 1864, to General Sherman for operations against General Johnston:

...I do not propose to lay down for you a plan of campaign but simply to lay down the work it is desirable to have done and leave you free to execute in your own way. Submit to me, however,...your plan of operations.<sup>xxxix</sup>

More recently, General Schwartzkopf directed his Marine Component to thrust straight into Kuwait, stating, “I'll leave it to Walt Boomer to figure out how he wants to do that,...”<sup>x1</sup> In fact, mission-type orders are doctrinal to the U. S. military. Joint Pub 5-00.2 states,

Mission-type orders normally are issued by the CJTF to all components — with receipt of the mission goes the authority to conduct operations in accordance with the CJTF's intent and concept of operations.<sup>xli</sup>

Normally then, the operational commander is expected to trust his subordinates to figure out how to accomplish the mission and not micromanage their efforts to do so. While micromanagement does occur in the U.S. military, it seems more a matter of personality in General Clark's case. He described his command pattern he developed while he was a battalion commander,

Be personally competent. Know and work the details; set high standards; provide lots of personal up-front leadership; and good planning; work to bring out the best in the people you have.<sup>xlii</sup>

He shared the Army view that “we always made it a practice to work details and intent two levels down and up.”<sup>xliii</sup> He applied this philosophy as SACEUR, working details of targeting with the JFACC, two echelons below him. Technology enabled him to do this at a great distance, a venue that would have been denied in an earlier age. Given his experience with higher headquarters micromanagement described in his quote on the British system, it is not surprising that he developed that pathology.

Did General Clark's micromanagement stem from his lack of a long term vision? An indicator would be his management of the targeting process. One would expect that he would be comfortable with the NATO-approved phase one targets but would become more intimately involved when the first phase of air operations failed to coerce Milosevic, and new targets had to be approved. Yet, in the words of Lieutenant General Short, “He [Clark] was looking at individual target photos on day seventy-eight the same way he was on day one.”<sup>xliv</sup> This would also lead toward a conclusion that micromanagement was a leadership style rather than a result of a lack of vision.

The problem of micromanagement would prove to be self-correcting in a wider war than Operation Allied Force. The CinC would ultimately be overwhelmed by the volume of information. As Lieutenant General Short put it, referring to a war with Iraq, “the CinC hasn't got time to approve 2000 targets.”<sup>xlv</sup> Operational or tactical failure could be the trigger that would identify that the size of the operation had exceeded the CinC's ability to micromanage. A less risky course of action is to make the conscious choice not to micromanage but to issue mission-type orders in accordance with doctrine and ensure the political ends can be achieved through available and politically acceptable military means.

## CONCLUSION

The experience of General Clark indicates that a war can be won despite a flawed operational vision and micromanagement of operations. The limited nature of Operation Allied Force allowed him to be intimately involved in its prosecution while not being overwhelmed with information.

The more important lesson to derive is that an operational vision disconnected from the political end state and dependent on scripting of the enemy is not likely to deliver the desired outcome. The operational commander must be prepared to assert himself with political leaders to create the conditions necessary for success of his organization and to advise properly of the actions that may be ultimately required, that is, the worst case as well as the probable one. He must forge the connection between his plans and the desired political end state so that his vision and the achievement of his operational objectives support the accomplishment of that end state. He must ensure in his planning that he accurately identifies both the enemy's center of gravity and his own. His planning must create the necessary branch and sequel plans to deal respectively with enemy counteraction or his own success. Having thus developed a plan with clear, accurate objectives, the operational commander is then prepared to achieve fast-paced, decisive operations by unleashing his subordinates and resisting the temptation to micromanage them.

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<sup>i</sup> General Wesley K. Clark, Waging Modern War, (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2001), 106.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>iv</sup> General Wesley K. Clark, "Keynote Speech at the Brookings Institution by General Wesley Clark, Former Supreme Allied Commander, Europe," Federal News Service, (8 June 2000), Academic Universe, Lexis-Nexis; (Dayton, OH: Lexis-Nexis). (24 March 2002)

<sup>v</sup> Clark, Waging Modern War, 184.

<sup>vi</sup> Dr. Milan Vego, "Wake-Up Call in Kosovo," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 126, no.10 (October 2000): 68.

<sup>vii</sup> Secretary of Defense William Cohen quoted in Anthony H. Cordesman, The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 87; and Department of Defense, Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report, (Washington, DC: 2000), 8.

<sup>viii</sup> Clark, Waging Modern War, 122-124.

<sup>ix</sup> General Accounting Office, Kosovo Air Operations Need to Maintain Alliance Cohesion Resulted in Doctrinal Departures, (Washington, DC: 2001), 2.

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<sup>x</sup> Patrick Wintour, “War Strategy Ridiculed,” The Guardian, (21 July 2000), <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4042746,00.html>> [6 April 2002].

<sup>xi</sup> Clark, Waging Modern War, 236-237.

<sup>xii</sup> Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 91-92.

<sup>xiii</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>xiv</sup> U.K. Parliament. House of Commons. Select Committee on Defence, “Annex A: Summary,” Fourteenth Report: Lessons of Kosovo, (London, U.K.: 1999), <<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmfdfence/347/34723.htm>> [18 April 2002].

<sup>xv</sup> Jamie Dettmer, “Send in Troops or Flip a Coin,” Insight on the News, (14 June 1999), ProQuest, (Washington, DC: Washington Times Corporation), 8. (24 March 2002)

<sup>xvi</sup> U.K. Parliament.

<sup>xvii</sup> Lieutenant General Michael Short, USAF(Ret), telephone interview by author, 23 April 2002, tape recording, Newport, RI.

<sup>xviii</sup> Daalder and O’Hanlon, 105.

<sup>xix</sup> Short.

<sup>xx</sup> Operation Rolling Thunder was the U.S. bombing offensive over North Vietnam 1965-1968. It was used for “signaling” to North Vietnam and was marked by gradualism, bombing pauses, restrictive targeting, and target selection made by the National Command Authority.

<sup>xxi</sup> Short.

<sup>xxii</sup> Clark, Waging Modern War, 220.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Anthony Zinni, “A Commander Reflects,” United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 126, no. 7 (July 2000), 36.

<sup>xxiv</sup> John A. Gentry, “Military Leadership and the Emperor’s New Clothes,” National Security Studies Quarterly, 6, no. 2 (Spring 2000), 68-69.

<sup>xxv</sup> Michael Ignatieff, Virtual War, (New York, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2000), 111.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Benjamin S. Lambeth, NATO’s Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001), 210.

<sup>xxvii</sup> General Accounting Office, 8.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>xxix</sup> Short.

<sup>xxx</sup> General Accounting Office, 9.

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xxxii Short.

xxxiii Department of Defense, 28; and Lambeth, 217.

xxxiv Admiral James Ellis was dual-hatted as Commander, Joint Task Force Noble Anvil, and Commander, Allied Forces South during Operation Allied Force. Lambeth, 217.

xxxv Ibid., 217.

xxxvi Clark, Waging Modern War, 10-11.

xxxvii Brenda Maddox, "Why Top Brass Never Sticks its Neck Out," The Times, (23 July 1997), Academic Universe, Lexis-Nexis. (London: Times Newspapers Limited). (8 April 2002)

xxxviii Clark, Waging Modern War, 396.

xxxix Richard J. Newman, "Vietnam's Forgotten Lessons Twenty-five Years After the End of the War, Does the Pentagon Remember the Causes of America's Defeat?," U.S. News and World Report, 128, no. 17 (May 1, 2000), 40.

xl General Ulysses S. Grant, quoted in J. F. C. Fuller, The Generalship of U.S. Grant, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1958. Reprint, Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Company, 1977), 219.

xl H. Norman Schwarzkopf, It Doesn't Take a Hero, (New York: Linda Grey Bantam Books, 1992), 382.

xl Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Task Force Planning Guidance and Procedures, Joint Pub 5-00.2 (Washington, DC: 13 January 1999), III-3.

xlii Clark, Waging Modern War, 24.

xliii Ibid., 342.

xliv Short.

xlv Short.

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